

The MCA Advisory

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From the Editor

Between an uplifting annual meeting, David Menchell's Best-in-Show Exhibit and much camaraderie, ANA 2004 was a great convention for medal collectors. We have a wonderful platform on which to build.

A while back, you submitted your collecting specialties. We need to tabulate and publish your submissions and we will. Those of you who listed a special interest in mint medals must be salivating at the prospect of Ford V. This auction will feature a complete run of the military and navals in silver (plus two in gold) as well as a wealth of award medals for lifesaving and the like. How about you Julian mavens writing a few articles for MCA Advisory? Tell us what you like or what you bought or what you would have wanted to buy—and why. There is no doubt that the Ford material will bring out the faithful at the same time that it attracts new collectors. MCA wants to be in step with the times.

Annual Meeting

The seventh Annual Meeting of Medal Collectors of America was called to order by President John W. Adams.

What's New On Our Website!

CHECK OUT OUR WEBSITE EVERY MONTH

www.medalcollectors.org

Our Pittsburgh ANA venue made it possible to convene a panel of three dealers to field questions on the state of the market, trends in collecting tastes and the like. Joe Levine of Presidential, Howard Simmons of Simmons Gallery and our own John Kraljevitch of ANR formed the panel. Questions and answers were lively. If there was one theme that developed it was that eBay had made possible a material broadening of the market. This new reality served up a matching challenge in the need to educate a veritable hoard of inexperienced buyers. Our website, rich in material on medals is one possible source of such education if links to eBay auction lots can be developed.

Barry Tayman, our redoubtable Secretary-Treasurer, reported that we had 122 paid members (not including four or five that signed up at the meeting). The exchequer contains \$8075.72 and is growing modestly despite the considerable expense of a monthly publication. Enthusiasm for that publication was evinced along with a discussion of how to make it even better. Editor Adams pointed out that the volume of material being submitted was excellent; if he can get two or three longer articles (he has one), he will resume publication of The Medal Cabinet to compliment the more topical MCA Advisory.

David Boitnott, our webmaster, was present at the meeting to answer questions on this vibrant (and vital) dimension of our organization. A representative of the French Mint was introduced. And, most important, David Alexander chaired the Carl Carlson and

Georgia Stamm Chamberlain awards (see elsewhere in this issue). Barry Tayman made an acceptance speech on behalf of George Fuld, the most deserving winner of the Carlson Award.

All of this took place within the allotted hour, although many of those 27 persons present lingered to share their deep interest in the subject of medals.

Book Review

Illegal Tender by David Tripp
Simon & Schuster, New York, 2004

Illegal Tender, the saga of the 1933 double eagle, belongs to the numismatic world and, then again, it does not. The saga belongs because so many in the cast of characters are classic numismatic names—F.C.C. Boyd, B. Max Mehl, Abe Kosoff, T. James Clark, James MacAllister and the like. The story line is strongly reminiscent of the Fantastic 1894 Dollar, another one time numismatic riddle that was methodically solved.

Author David Tripp comes of the numismatic world but realized that the 1933 double eagle symbolized matters that were much larger. He weaves in The Great Depression, the first days of the presidency of Franklin Delano Roosevelt and the abandonment of the gold standard. While trafficking in macro issues, he also incorporates the all-too-human passions of greed and avarice.

In short, Illegal Tender views the 1933 double eagle from many perspectives, all of them richly relevant. Tripp's exhaustive research transforms

the many myths surrounding this legendary coin into a credible narrative. The reader is transported step by step from humble birth to the coronation. Nothing is left out, all previous theories are vetted and, in the end, we are left with the whole truth.

Few tales have been so entirely told. For the numismatist, and non-numismatist alike, Illegal Tender is a book that satisfies. It is must reading. (John W. Adams)

Letters to the Editor

Gentlemen:

It's possible that you already got the news, but if not, you'll enjoy hearing that MCA member David Menchell's exhibit, "Medals of Conflict, Medals of Conquest: The Numismatic Legacy of the French and Indian Wars" won the Howland Wood Best of Show Award at the ANA Anniversary Convention banquet in Pittsburgh on the evening of August 21. You saw the exhibit, I'm sure, and agree that it certainly merited the top award. I had the good fortune of sitting at his banquet table and being one of the first to congratulate him when the awards were announced. David's win should certainly warrant celebration in the next MCA Advisory.

Regards,

Bryce F. Doxzon

Editor: Agreed. We were edified by (and drooled over) all seven cases. David's entry was everything that an exhibit should be.

Medal Collectors of America's 2004 Awards Announced

Medal Collectors of America (MCA) presented two major awards at the American Numismatic Association's annual convention in Pittsburgh, PA,. The recognitions were bestowed at the medal group's seventh annual meeting on August 18 in the David Lawrence Convention Center.

The Carl W.A. Carlson Memorial Award honors the memory of one of America's leading pioneers in modern research and cataloging of medallic materials before his death in 2001. The award was given to Dr. George Fuld of Maryland, an internationally acclaimed cataloger of American tokens and medals whose work has spanned five decades.

Working with his late father Melvin Fuld, the 2004 recipient energized such long-dormant fields as Hard Times and Civil War tokens, medals of Benjamin Franklin, Lafayette and George Washington. It was George Fuld who first revised William S. Baker's *Medallic Portraits of Washington* in 1965, with a complete revision appearing in cooperation with Russell Rulau in 1986.

He has been a leader in modern auction cataloging in both tokens and medals for such leading firms as Kagin's, Bowers & Merena and Stack's, most recently as a consultant in Stack's sales of the great John J. Ford Jr. collection. "Few men have played such a long-term role in making tokens and medals understandable as well as collectible to today's numismatists as George Fuld,"

stated David Alexander. MCA's founder, "and Club is honored to provide this recognition in 2004."

The Carl W.A. Carlson Award was first given in 1999 and has been given to such significant figures as dealer H. Joseph Levine, researchers John W. Adams, Christopher Eimer, R.W. Julian and Dr. David Mennell.

Pittsburgh was the venue for MCA's first Georgia Stamm Chamberlain Award, conceived as a means of encouraging new researchers in the medal field. "MCA named its newest award for the late Gloria S. Chamberlain," Alexander noted, "who was one of America's trail-blazers in our field during the 1950's."

"Her work appeared in such publications as *The Numismatist*, when no one was really exploring such diverse topics as early U.S. Mint medals, medals of Quaker abolitionist Isaac Hopper and the series of the Circle of Friends of the Medallion. Her death at an early age in 1961 ended one of the most promising careers in medallic research and MCA believes her memory deserved this honor," Alexander concluded.

First recipient of the Chamberlain Award is Vicken Yegparian of New York City, a former ANA Young Numismatist of the Year and a presenter at the June 11, 2004 Conference of Coinage of the Americas (COAC) conducted by the American Numismatic Society. His research on virtually unknown engraved silver award medals of King's College (now Columbia University) shed light into a very obscure era of American

numismatics, the colonial era of His Majesty's Province of New York.

Investigating the unpublished story of the award medals highlights the role of the cultural elite of the province before the Revolution. Yegparian's work has provided valuable insights into the career of Elisha Gallaudet, otherwise recalled only as a banknote engraver and probable die cutter for the Continental Dollars. "MCA values Vicken's work for its professionalism, conciseness and exemplary delivery," Alexander explained.

Medal Collectors of America was founded at the 1998 ANA Convention in Portland. Awards have played and will play an important role in mapping the progress of this specialty as exemplified by its leading practitioners.

The Missing Link (John W. Adams)

The execution of the Comitia Americana medals was supervised by Benjamin Franklin who was succeeded by David Humphrey who was, in turn, succeeded by Thomas Jefferson. Humphrey procured only two of the medals, namely those for Horatio Gates and Nathaniel Greene. On his instructions, the gold medals, some number of copies and the dies themselves were forwarded to the then Secretary of State, John Jay, in 1787. Mr. Jay transmitted the gold medals to Gates and to Greene's widow with appropriate salutations and quite probably the dies as well.

The Gates dies show up at the U.S. Mint in 1801 courtesy of Aaron Burr. The Greene dies (and gold medal) have not been heard from since.

Last year, the author discovered an example of the Greene medal struck from original dies but in a broken and badly rusted state. Produced on a thick planchet with a bronzed finish, the piece was clearly the work of the U.S. Mint. Thus, someone must have discovered the Greene dies and attempted to use them to fulfill collector demand for this very rare medal.

At ANA 2004, the undersigned purchased a Greene electro. With its well-disguised seams and even bronzed finish, the medal was easily attributable to Benjamin Franklin Peale. No doubt it was he who also supervised the quickly abortive resurrection of the Greene dies. With the dies broken, Peale made this electro from one of the early restrikes. The pattern of rust marks on the electro is identical to those on the thick planchet struck piece described above, although the die breaks are not as advanced.

The measurements of the medals is as follows:

	Weight	Diameter	Thickness
French Original	75.9gms	56.4mm	3.0mm
U.S. Mint Restrike	143.9	58.9	5.9
U.S. Mint Electro	161.7	59.5	6.8

The greater diameter of U.S. Mint products is caused by the use of larger planchets that in turn permit a wider rim. The greater weight is a function of

thickness and diameter. The electro is thicker than the restrikes because the same thick flan is sandwiched between two thin electroformed surfaces. The resultant seams are masterfully disguised. However, the electro does not “ring,” probably because of the filler between the electro forms (parts of which are in high relief) and the flan. Very possibly, the planchets is cast, not rolled.

Julian describes the unsuccessful search for the Daniel Morgan dies and the making of Anthony Wayne electros after a search for those dies was likewise unsuccessful. The Greene electro at hand proves that, faced with collector demand for the rarer Comitia medals, mint employees continued the search for missing dies. Their persistence makes it now possible to own a Greene “original” made either in France or in the United States.

Phipp’s Medal (Betts 67) (Daniel Fearon)

The whereabouts of Phipp’s gold medal is not now known, but the “Spanish Treasure” medal is well recorded. It is a medal designed by the silversmith and medallist, George Bower, and shows on the obverse the conjoined busts of James II and Mary of Modena. The reverse shows the recovery operation, this in itself an historic image in terms of treasure salvage. It is first catalogued by the diarist John Evelyn in his 1697 book *Numismata* [p.151, LXXXVII]. “Upon Occasion of the *Spanish Silver Wreck*, out of which great Treasure had been gotten from the bottom of the Sea, by our Bold and Ingenious *Urinators* (after it had lain

submerged for many years) was the following *Medalion* struck, bearing the *Effigies* of both their Majesties". In fact, two varieties of the medal are known, though usually only the more common (54.5mm diameter) is listed [Medallic Illustrations, vol. I, 619/33; Betts 67; Milford Haven 72; Sandwich S.3]. The second, and considerably rarer medal, is smaller (52mm diameter), the busts are in higher relief, the king's hair is differently arranged, his armour plain. It is from the same obverse die as the Complimentary Medal dated 1685, with a reverse of the Sun in Majesty [MI 610/16]. The use of this obverse is highly suitable given the name of Phipp's ship, the *James and Mary*. On the reverse of this medal the *James and Mary*, is more distant but the recovery operation to the fore, more detailed. There are clouds in the sky. And most noticeably the rim comes with a mark, an indentation some 8mm long, where the suspension loop would be added. This variety is recorded in silver and, very rarely, in silver gilt. The supposition is that gilt medals would have been presented to someone closely involved with the expedition.

(Mr. Fearon does us a service in defining the differences between these two varieties. The differences are sufficiently great that it would be more proper to consider each a separate medal. In his correspondence with us, Mr. Fearon posits that the "clouds" medal was made first and issued to those involved in the expedition. In contrast, the larger medal was struck by King James and given to those who did him service of whatever sort. — Ed.)

Medal Collectors: Hold Your Hats

Ford Medal Collection Begins Its Dispersal at Stack's in October

While the Stack's sale of John Ford's Washingtoniana collection last May gave medal collectors a taste of the treats that await deeper into John's magnificent cabinet, the big guns roll out in earnest next month as world-class groups of U.S. Mint Naval medals, Lifesaving medals, Personal medals, Mint and Treasury medals, and other American historical medals appear. If you've been following the other Ford sales, this installment's surprises will come as no surprise – there are famous medals in unlisted metals, incredible rarities that you subconsciously knew about and always wondered where they went, and associated items like sketches and splashers that no one but John Ford would have recognized as vitally important decades ago.

The individual highlight may be the (1790) Diplomatic Medal along with a series of related splashers poured from the hands of Dupré. The pet project of Thomas Jefferson, who promised a diplomat a specimen of the medal struck in gold before ever hiring Dupré to create it, only three specimens in bronze are known. None were ever struck in gold "with a chain of 365 links" as Jefferson had imagined it, but so it goes – the U.S. didn't take a thousand generations to people the West as Jefferson thought it would either.

If you ever found the War of 1812 or the field of Naval medals boring, you won't any longer. Not only is the unique gold striking of the Robert Henley medal

the ultimate rarity in the series, it is incredibly beautiful. Estimates of its final selling price have been whispered around by the handful of enthusiasts in the field, and while we will not publish speculations (this is not a racing form, after all), any bidders who plan to be competitive should come to the sale properly bankrolled. More silver Naval medals will be presented in the Ford Collection than any sale since Dreyfuss. That 1986 sale contained 7 silver Naval medals – Ford owns nearly a dozen, including fascinating duplicates of the McDonough and Charles Stewart medals. Master Commandant Thomas MacDonough received a medal from Congress after “decisively defeat[ing] a superior force on Lake Champlain, ending British hopes of isolating New England and giving added leverage to American negotiators at Ghent,” according to Chris Neuzil’s excellent 1997 COAC paper. The Dreyfuss sale notes that one such medal was in the Ford Collection, but never mentions a second one – a piece in an ivory-backed casing that some have compared to a pocket watch. A recent *Coin World* article called it “unique in this form.” Another silver MacDonough medal was sold in the December 1980 Johnson and Jensen sale as lot 484.

The duplicate Charles Stewart medal is perhaps even neater than the extra MacDonough. The piece has been partially gilt and the edge has been named to the ship’s surgeon, Dr. John Carney. If you happen to be a doctor who loves American medals (I can think of more than a few), this piece is tempting, but so is a special gold medal awarded by Congress in 1929 to Dr. Aristides

Agramonte for the conquest of yellow fever. Both varieties of the Dr. Benjamin Rush medal will be sold, including a silver striking of Julian PE-30, depicting Rush’s estate Sydenham on the reverse. The Dr. Frederick Rose medal in silver (Julian PE-29) is said to be unique – it was awarded by Congress for the British surgeon’s actions in saving the crew of the *Susquehanna* in 1858.

Among other medals classified as “Personal medals” in Julian’s system, silver specimens of the Washington Allston and Gilbert Stuart medals will appeal to art lovers. The Charles Carroll medal, a copy of which is attached to a monument at Carroll’s still standing home in Annapolis, is represented in every form – gold, silver (4), and bronze (3). A census listing in the October 1985 Sotheby’s New York sale noted 4 gold specimens (including the Ford piece) and 13 silver pieces. Having not seen the catalogue yet, it will be interesting to see how close Michael Hodder’s research parallels these decade and a half old findings.

Among “MT” medals, those struck to commemorate characters involved in the Mint and Treasury departments, one of the least known medals also ranks as one of the rarest: the silver Alexander Hamilton “To Public Credit” medal, which is apparently unpublished in that composition. Two silver Adam Eckfeldt medals will be included in the catalogue, struck when Eckfeldt officially retired from the Mint. Of course, he spent much of his retirement showing up at the Mint nearly daily, overseeing younger members of his family employed there,

and taking the time to work on the Mint Cabinet which he had founded in 1838.

in the air it will be a memorable experience. (John Kraljevitch)

Lifesaving aficionados will have a feast in October. A gold specimen of the Julian LS-1 (State Department, First Class) is dated 1861 and awarded for assistance in rescuing the crew of the *Mary Staples*. No less than 7 gold LS-3s (the one that looks like a Coiled Hair \$4 stella) and 2 gold LS-9s will be among the offerings. Specialists will fight over a group of original sketches for an unadopted design for the LS-15 *Metis* medal, and many more lots could be singled out for their rarity or exciting story. The catalogue will be out soon, not to worry.

This October section of the Ford collection will include many other medals, both U.S. Mint pieces and other good historical pieces (I haven't even mentioned the *four* 1787 Columbia and Washington medals yet!), and of course many more await other future auctions. This catalogue will undoubtedly prove to be as much of a reference work as other installments both past and future.

The Ford sale will be held on October 12, 2004 in New York City. Important early American coins will share the bill on the 12th, and another installment of the Ford currency collection will follow the same evening. It will be a week of auctions in NYC – ANR holds an auction on October 11 (no medals until November for ANR, but stay tuned!), and Stack's will hold two more nights of sales on the 13th and 14th. Lot viewing starts at Stack's on October 4th. If you have the chance, go see these medals – even if you never get your hand



G. Croghan

Add to the Croghan article in the August issue.



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